

## POWWOW

Continued from Page 30

a project that their university was conducting, which involved the compilation of a list of holy sites, the pilots were more than happy to assist. They flew to each of the sites and took aerial photographs. The naming of the helicopter is a monument to the Lakota tribe's place in American history.

"It's actually quite a process to name a helicopter," said Galbreath. "There is a Department of Defense directive that requires the naming of helicopters after Indian tribes. The tribes put in a request to have the helicopter named after them. The tribe's characteristics also should fit the characteristics and uses of the airframe."

"The Lakota were known as peaceful people, and 'one with the earth,' so that's how this helicopter came to be known as the Lakota," he said. "They were disappointed that it didn't have guns on it, though."

"The Lakota are famous for wiping out the 7th Cavalry during the Indian Wars of the 19th century, though," said Dunn, noting the irony.

"They are peaceful up to a point," said Galbreath.

The 5th is the second active-duty unit in the Army to receive the Lakota. The Lakotas replace UH-60 Black Hawks that are currently used in non-combat roles to provide more Black Hawks to the war effort.

The unit uses its aircraft to support Joint Readiness Training Center with distinguished visitor flights and personnel movement on Fort Polk, but is also in the process of training and qualifying for an array of other missions here.



COURTESY PHOTO

The crews of two Lakota helicopters from Fort Polk's 5th Aviation Battalion pose with a Lakota performer at the powwow in South Dakota.

The pilots are already adding some Lakota customs to their unit's traditions.

"Something we picked up from them was the saying 'hoka hey,' which means 'let's roll,'" said Dunn. "The elders also gave us each a medicine wheel. It protects the individual and

represents the four tribes of Lakota, the points of the compass and is made of porcupine quill."

Before the Soldiers departed, they invited the Lakota veterans to sign the backs of the helicopters, inside the doors.

"I think it meant a lot to them that

we allowed them to do that," said Galbreath.

Those signatures will likely provide inspiration to generations of flight crews as long as the aircraft are in service, reminding them of their proud heritage.

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# Army fires first round from cannon on FCS chassis

## FUTURE COMBAT SYSTEMS PROGRAM OFFICE

Army News Service

YUMA PROVING GROUND, Ariz. – The Future Combat Systems program successfully fired the first artillery projectile from a manned ground vehicle non-line-of-sight cannon prototype during a demonstration Sept. 23.

The successful firing of the projectile is a milestone for the program, said Lt. Col. Robert McVay, Army product manager for NLOS-C.

“This marks the first 155 mm round fired from a fully automated howitzer mounted on an FCS hybrid-electric chassis and remotely commanded through its on-board computers and controls,” he said.

The NLOS-C has the ability to rapidly deliver precision munitions in both urban and conventional battle space, officials said, adding it is the lead prototype in the Army’s family of eight FCS manned ground vehicles.

Advanced FCS technology provides the two-man artillery crew with the capability to rapidly deliver highly accurate sustained munitions for close and destructive fire. That technology includes a fully automated ammunition loading system, improved accuracy through on-



U.S. ARMY PHOTO

The Future Combat Systems program successfully fires the first artillery projectile from the manned ground vehicle non-line-of-sight cannon prototype during a demonstration Sept. 23.

board projectile tracking, and the FCS network and sensors.

A total of eight NLOS-C prototypes will be produced between 2008 and 2009. All will undergo rigorous testing, safety certification and evaluations at various Army test facilities. Officials said the NLOS-C prototypes will be used for testing and evaluation of not only the artillery system, but also the MGV common chassis and technologies.

The NLOS-C P1 will fire an additional 500 rounds

through early 2009 to obtain a safety release that will allow Soldiers to move, shoot and communicate from an NLOS-C in spring 2009. Beginning in 2010, Soldiers at the Army’s Evaluation Task Force are scheduled to receive the first of 18 NLOS-C platforms. The AETF will put those vehicles through combat scenarios to provide lessons learned that will be used to enhance and finalize design for the final production NLOS-Cs and the rest of the MGV family.

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# CFC kicks off fundraising campaign across Army

J.D. LEIPOLD

Army News Service

WASHINGTON – The Combined Federal Campaign, which kicked off Sept. 1 and runs through Dec. 15, is the world's largest annual workplace charity drive.

CFC raises millions of dollars each year to assist some 4,000 charities through donations from federal employees and servicemembers that support eligible nonprofit organizations that provide health and human service benefits throughout the world.

Secretary of the Army Pete Geren officially opened the National Capital Area CFC campaign Sept. 23 with an event at the Pentagon auditorium open to Army employees and Soldiers.

Clifford Lovejoy, the CFC manager for the Army's NCA campaign, said the goal in the area is to raise \$2.95 million and he has 34 campaign managers working with their respective commands to help raise the money.

"Now we have more than 4,000 charities within CFC and what I have found is that no matter who you are or where you are in life, if you have a situation where you need some help, there is no doubt in my mind that one of those 4,000 charities will be able to help you," Lovejoy said.

Case in point is Sgt. 1st Class Jake Keeslar and his wife Vanessa. Jake lost both his legs in Iraq to an improvised explosive device in 2006. While Jake

was deployed, Vanessa was living at their homebase of Fort Wainwright, Alaska. When she received the news that her husband had been injured and was at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, she came to Washington, D.C.

"One of the charities that helped me most was when I first arrived here

in a city I'd never been to before," Vanessa said.

"There was a program that offered rental cars free of charge, so the fund gave me a rental car for almost four months while my husband was an in-patient."

Today, the Keeslars are stationed in the district and Jake serves as the senior non-

commissioned officer in charge of the Warrior Transition Units. Vanessa was offered an opportunity to create a new program that will provide respite care and services for family members and caregivers of injured Soldiers.

"The organization does a lot of different things, provides hotel rooms, apartments for Soldiers while they're in transition; we have different outings and we have a mentoring program to help as they are transitioning back into the real world," she said.

Maj. James Marrotta of the National Guard Bureau credits one of the CFC charities with saving his life. Diagnosed with a non-Hodgkins lymphoma, Marrotta said one treatment was chemotherapy, but it only had a 35 percent chance of making him go into remission.



C. TODD LOPEZ

Clifford Lovejoy, the CFC manager for the Army's National Capital Area campaign, said the goal in the nation's capital is to raise \$2.95 million and he has 34 campaign managers working with their respective commands to help raise the money.

"I'm in full remission now because of an experimental treatment I went through at the National Institute of Health, which has a 98 percent remission success rate," he said. "I give that charity and all the charities that fund cancer research the credit they deserve."

"A lot of people donate money, but

they don't necessarily donate locally," Marrotta said. "People should look at the catalog and donate to whatever local charities they're interested in. There's something for everyone, from animal rescue to food kitchens to supplying coats for needy children and schools."



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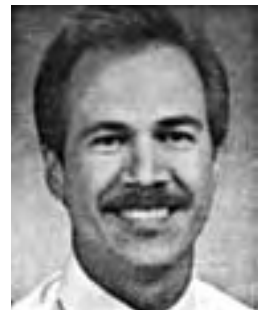
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# FIRST RESPONDERS

## join Soldiers for mass-casualty exercise



1st Lt. Audrey Richert, a registered nurse at William Beaumont Army Medical Center, applies a bandage to the face of Pfc. Chris Wielenga, a communications specialist from 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, during the post's Sept. 24 mass-casualty exercise.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY STEPHEN BAACK • MONITOR STAFF

**F**irefighters, police officers and William Beaumont Army Medical Center personnel here participated in a mass-casualty exercise near the Jeb Stuart South access control point Sept. 24.

The event was part of the post's week-long force-protection exercise that tested the responses of units and directorates across post as simulated force-protection levels rose and fell throughout the week.

The exercise presented a scenario in which what was initially reported as a traffic accident between an industrial vehicle and a motor vehicle turned into reports of an explosion involving hazardous materials.

"When our firefighters arrived on scene, they saw signs of a chlorine shipping container," said Charles J. Butler, Fort Bliss fire chief and incident commander. "At that point, we determined that we had a hazardous-materials accident, and we took appropriate actions."

While firefighters set up a decontamination staging area, Army medical personnel teamed up with other firefighters on scene and emergency medical technicians to triage and treat more than 30 Soldiers with simulated injuries at the site.

"This is my first mass-casualty exercise, so this definitely was a challenge for me, but good," said 1st Lt. Audrey Richert, a registered nurse at WBAMC. "I am pending deployment, so this was

an excellent exercise for me to participate in."

Richert triaged patients and helped the other medical personnel with first-line care — from cuts and bruises and severe injuries to psychological trauma.

"I feel it has prepared me because it does give you some of the real-world experience — of course, nothing can really prepare you for the real thing because, as an exercise, these Soldiers probably aren't going to really act how an actual Soldier who was severely wounded would act," she said. "In terms of the process and procedure, I felt it was a very good experience for me."

After many of the patients were taken to WBAMC, hazardous-materials technicians donned their suits and inspected the explosion site with the help of two robots from the 741st Ordnance Company. As the team of three hazmat techs directed the robots to a possible secondary device,



Pvt. Christian Jordan, B Btry., 2nd Bn., 3rd FA Regt., 1st BCT, 1st AD, lies moulaged with head trauma near the detonation site during the post's mass-casualty exercise Sept. 24.

as no one had conducted after-action reviews at the time, he said it went well in his opinion. The main challenge, he said, was that the protective suits increase the physical demands of the job.

"They actually do vitals on you before you go in, and if you don't meet a certain criteria, they won't even allow you to go into the scene," Reynolds said. "It's physically demanding, and it's always a challenge for the firefight-

ers to go in. ... Our guys are in pretty good shape, so we do pretty well."

Firefighters like Reynolds comprised the bulk of rescue personnel on scene, with 16 total and others in reserve to handle real-world emergencies. In fact, Butler said firefighters handled an actual emergency during the scenario without having to halt the exercise.

"We always measure that against the real-world stuff and the ability for us to still respond to real-world incidents," Butler said.

"We limited our radio transmissions so we wouldn't interfere with the real-world emergencies — and we did send a real-world fire truck with four people on it to the medical emergency," he added.

Butler, who was handling events from another site, said the exercise went well from his perspective — but he said he thinks the simulated victims may have a different opinion. He pointed out that some Soldiers were lying on gravel and waiting for help for quite a while. Butler stressed, however, that because the scenario presented a possible chemical terrorist attack, his firefighters approached cautiously.

"Dead or injured firefighters can't help anybody," Butler said. "So, I think our victims probably would have thought that we took too long, but in reality, we were being cautious, we were following the books, following our checklists and doing what we're supposed to do."



Pfc. William Johnston, an explosive ordnance disposal technician with 741st Ordnance Company, controls a robot to check for a secondary explosive device during the post's Sept. 24 mass-casualty exercise.

(Right) Hazardous-materials technicians from the Fort Bliss Fire Department check Pvt. Christian Jordan, B Btry., 2nd Bn., 3rd FA Regt., 1st BCT, 1st AD, for chemical contamination.



Victor Ontiveros, left, an emergency medical technician from William Beaumont Army Medical Center, helps Art Prieto, a Fort Bliss firefighter, as they take away Pfc. Hugo Tirado, a field artilleryman with 2nd Bn., 3rd FA Regt. 1st BCT, 1st AD, on a stretcher during the post's mass-casualty exercise Sept. 24.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY HEATHER WILBURN



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PHOTOS BY LACEY JUSTINGER

Staff Sgt. Omar Hernandez, from the Fort Bliss Command group, and his wife Jennifer dance in traditional Mexican costumes during the Hispanic Heritage observance Thursday at Soldier Hall.

## Bliss honors Hispanic Heritage with ceremony

LACEY JUSTINGER

Fort Bliss Public Affairs

An observance honoring Hispanic Heritage Month and the contributions and influence Hispanics and their culture have had on the U.S. was held Thursday at Soldier Hall here.

The event was hosted by 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, and included several cultural performances from singers and dance troupes from El Paso and the surrounding area.

"We are a nation of immigrants," said Alex Hernandez, guest speaker at the event and El Paso Community College's director of human resource development. "We represent different cultures, ethnicity and roots. But even though we are different, we are American first."

"It's important that people are aware of culture – not just from one ethnic background, but the whole human race," said Norma Molina, a Fort Bliss government service civilian who performed several flamenco dances with Gitanos del Paso. "The military is a melting pot of multiple cultures. In one

way or another we are all intertwined. For example, the flamenco dance is from Spain, but the footwork I do is inspired from Africa."

Two dance troupes performed several dances: Gitanos del Paso and Folkorico Tradiciones Panamenas. Aris Cajar, the director of Folkorico Tradiciones Panamenas, said he thought the Soldiers would appreciate the dances since all the movements are diverse but based on flirting or fighting.

La Malinche brought down the house with an expressive showcase of talent while singing several songs in Spanish. Soldiers represented different eras and ethnic backgrounds by wearing traditional costumes donated by Mexican Regional Costumes.

September was chosen as National Hispanic Heritage month to commemorate the independence of Chile, Costa



Norma Molina, who works for the Fort Bliss Protocol Office, dances the flamenco.

Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua. The celebration honors Hispanic heritage from Europe, Mexico, Central America, South America and the Caribbean.

"We need to respect the diverse cultures, roots and heritage of differing ethnicities, not just Hispanic," Hernandez said. "Every culture is rich in tradition. But we are all American first. So, in reality there's only one race: the human

race. The more we know about each other, the better the sense of direction for the country."

The cheers from the assembled mass of Soldiers and civilians may have drowned out some Hernandez's closing remarks, but the message was clear: Honoring and respecting diversity will unify and strengthen our families, communities and the nation, he said.



A performer known as "La Malinche" sings a traditional song in Spanish for those attending the Hispanic Heritage observance.



Members of the Folkorico Tradiciones Panamenas dance troupe perform during Fort Bliss' Hispanic Heritage celebration Thursday at Soldier Hall.



# Affirmative Claims Section works to recover medical expenses

**MANNY CARO**

*Fort Bliss Claims Office*

At some time in their life, nearly every American is injured severely enough that they need medical care and treatment. This fact is also true for active-duty and retired servicemembers and their family members. Fortunately, these individuals receive free medical care and services as part of their benefits. This doesn't mean, however, that all this care and treatment doesn't come at a cost to the U.S. government.

The Federal Medical Care Recovery Act provides a statutory basis for the government to recover the reasonable value of medical care provided to injured active and retired servicemembers and their family members at government expense when the circumstances create tort liability upon some third party. In other words, when some other party is responsible for the incident that caused the injuries, the FMCRA allows the government to pursue a claim against that party or their insurance carrier for the cost of the medical care that the government has provided.

Similar to these FMCRA affirmative claims, Title 10 U.S. Code, Section 1095 allows the government to recover the reasonable value of medical care provided at government expense from individuals or businesses that have legally agreed to assume the responsibility for paying

for the medical expenses of another individual, regardless of who is responsible for the incident. Usually this means the automobile or medical insurance carrier for an injured active or retired servicemember and his or her family members. Both of these types of claims are called affirmative claims because the government is "affirmatively" trying to recover money from someone else. Separate authority also exists that allows the government to pursue claims for damage to government property.

The majority of the situations that result in an affirmative claims involve incidents such as motor vehicle accidents, slip-and-fall accidents, animal bites, and some workers' compensation cases (usually involving family members working in the civilian sector) where the servicemember or dependent is the injured party.

In an affirmative claim, an active or retired servicemember or a member of his or her family is typically involved in an accident or incident that results in the servicemember or dependent needing medical care and treatment. This care and treatment is then provided at a military medical treatment facility, such as William Beaumont Army Medical Center, or through some alternate means, such as TRICARE coverage. When this happens, the government will attempt to recover the reasonable cost of that care

and treatment. Army Reg. 27-20, Chapt. 14, explains the required process to pursue recovery of the government's claim.

The Affirmative Claims Section of the Fort Bliss Claims Office aggressively pursues collections of these claims on a daily basis. This involves contacting the injured parties to obtain information about the accident/incident, requesting medical records and medical cost computations, contacting and asserting claims with insurance carriers, and working with attorneys representing both the injured party and the party against whom the government has asserted a claim.

When a servicemember retains an attorney to represent his or her interest against the person who caused the accident, the attorney will frequently need copies of medical records and cost computations to help substantiate their claims against the other side. The Affirmative Claims Section also provides assistance in obtaining these documents for the servicemember and their attorney whenever requested and when possible. This assistance can be of tremendous value to the servicemember in pursuing their case.

Once the Affirmative Claims Section has recovered funds to reimburse the government for the reasonable value of the medical care it provided, the funds are generally paid to the military medical treatment facility where the medical care was provided. For Fort Bliss, this is usu-

ally WBAMC. This can be a tremendous benefit for the medical facility as it provides an additional resource to support their mission in providing appropriate medical care.

Two important points should be remembered. First, the government's claim is almost always made against an insurance company or similar type business. It is never made against the servicemember for his or her own injuries or those of his family members. This does not mean a claim will not be made against the insurance carrier of the servicemember, but it does mean the servicemember personally will not be asked to personally pay the government for the medical care provided. Second, the right of the government to recover the reasonable value of the medical care it provided is separate and independent of the rights or wishes of any individuals involved. In other words, servicemembers do not have a say in whether or not the government tries to recover these costs, either from the other party's insurance company or from the servicemember's own insurance company. Related to this is that all servicemembers are required to cooperate with the government in connection with any affirmative claims that the government is investigating or pursuing.

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LYNN FRANCIOUS

ACAP Career Counselor

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### Research your employers

Stop by the ACAP center for a full list of employers that will be attending the job fair. Google companies that you are interested in and research what types of position, skills and education are required. Target your efforts into positions that you qualify for and are prepared to take.

### Create, edit and finalize your resume

Based on your research, create a targeted resume. You definitely want to avoid using a “one-size-fits-all” resume. If you already have a resume, you may want to consider creating another for the different positions you may be interested in, such as law enforcement, logistics or management. It’s also a good time to create a federal resume using the federal resume builder on USA Jobs, [www.usajobs.com](http://www.usajobs.com), for federal employers that will be in attendance.

ACAP can assist you in creating a resume. However, space is limited and an appointment is needed. If you are not able to get an appointment before the job fair, visit the office and pick up a worksheet and sample resumes.

Make sure to spell check, grammar check and format your resume properly. ACAP counselors can also assist in this. We provide proofreading, editing and formatting services.

While you don’t have to invest in expensive, colored or fancy resume paper, you should utilize clean, good-quality paper on which to print your resume. Several copies should be made prior to attending. Your resume should be immaculate with no folds, creases, smudges, runs, smears, rips, wrinkles or perspiration, food or beverage stains. Find a good portfolio to carry your copies in.

### Personal presentation

When attending the job fair, be aware many employers are interviewing on the spot. These employers understand it is a military installation and the majority of attendees will be Soldiers in uniform, which is acceptable for such an occasion. However, even in uniform, make sure you are at your best: boots cleaned and polished, hair trimmed and neat, and uniform pressed. If you are able to wear civilian clothes, ensure they are interview appropriate. Under no circumstance should tennis shoes, flip flops, jeans, workout gear, baseball caps or T-shirts be worn. If you are planning on “talking turkey” with any of the employers, remember first impressions are lasting impressions.

### Follow up

If you obtained contact information, give the employer a call and personally thank them for their time and information. Send a formal thank you letter to each employer to whom you submitted your resume.

The ACAP job fair will be conducted from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Oct. 9 at the Centennial Club on Biggs Field. More than 60 perspective employers are scheduled to be in attendance, including several federal and out-of-area employers. There is no cost for entrance. Spouses, dependants and civilians are welcome to attend.

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# Memorial car show honors Rubalcava, her family for fourth year

STEPHEN BAACK

Monitor Staff

Council 4457 of the League of United Latin American Citizens held their fourth annual car show memorializing Sgt. Isela Rubalcava, a fallen Soldier from Canutillo, Texas, Saturday in East El Paso.

Rubalcava was killed May 8, 2004, in Iraq, and was the first female Soldier from the El Paso area to be killed in the war.

Nearly 20 automobiles, ranging from a 1982 Corvette to a tricked-out 2004 Hyundai Sonata, graced the parking lots of an Eastside sports bar. The seven-hour car show was accompanied by live rock, blues, R&B and hip hop music.

Among the attendees was the Rubalcava family, who accepted a folded and framed American flag from the State Department's Provincial Reconstruction Team Headquarters in Mosul, Iraq, where it was flown.

"That just brought chills all over me," said Victor Lopez, president of Council 4457. "I couldn't believe it. The family, you could see – I was looking at the mom and tears came down her eyes. Letting her know that we do care about what we're doing, I just felt that really good about it."

One main goal of Council 4457 of LULAC, Lopez said, is to raise funds



STEPHEN BAACK

**Mark Bombach, a radiologic technologist at William Beaumont Army Medical Center, dusts off his 2000 Corvette at the fourth annual Sgt. Isela Rubalcava memorial car show Saturday.**

for scholarships aimed at graduating high school students. Just this year, District 4 of LULAC raised more than \$48,000 among its nine councils. Lopez said the council broke even during this particular fundraiser, and that the main goal is the memorial itself.

Still, Lopez said, he hopes the event will be better next year. Joe Gutierrez,

deputy director for LULAC District 4, shared his sentiments.

"I'm never satisfied with these events," Gutierrez said. "I always think that we can do a better job."

Gutierrez said Council 4457 had another site in mind for this year, but they had to scramble to pull things off when plans fell through. He added it

was a much bigger event at Western Playland last year.

"I was disappointed in the turnout, but there's always room for improvement," he said.

Gutierrez, however, seems to be behind the event itself and what it stands for. Showing appreciation for the family, he said, was what stood out to him.

"We've always had the color guard and the special presentation to the family," he said. "The first year, of course, was very touching. Although I did not serve in the military, it's always a touching moment for me. I've gotten to know the family quite well. I think they're very deserving of any recognition we give them – what little recognition we give them."

Both Lopez and Gutierrez said they wish to transform the memorial car show into a much bigger event for everyone, not only to raise more money, but to honor the Rubalcava family.

"These events always take time," said Gutierrez. "In my opinion, better planning and a better site would make this into a bigger event."

"We don't want to forget her," Lopez said. "We want to let people know that she was a brave Soldier, and we want El Paso to participate. It'll get bigger and bigger."



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# Role models for children important during family separation, divorce

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If our children grow up in the presence of role models who exhibit love, trust, respect, responsibility and integrity, they too will possess and exhibit those values. One of the greatest gifts we can give our children is a positive attitude about their family unit and each individual family member, while incorporating each of the aforementioned values. Positive attitudes about family can be modeled in intact and divided families alike, but in the midst of family separation, some parents tend to forget they are important role models for their children, focusing instead on their own emotions.

If a child witnesses his parents' constant fighting, that child will grow up believing parental and family conflict is normal. That is how he too will behave because, at a young age, he won't be able to differentiate between normal and abnormal. He won't stop and think, "It's wrong for my parents to be yelling and hitting one another."

Even when he is able to realize verbal and physical abuse is wrong, his parents' behavior will still set the stage for his own behavior. Decades later, after he's made the same mistakes his parents made, he will eventually realize violence between adults is not only dysfunctional, but it can be illegal as well. Unfortunately, the mistakes he makes can, and usually do, adversely affect the rest of his life, including the lives of his own children. In that way, family dysfunction easily cycles from one generation to the next.

Family dysfunction is also evident in verbal attacks made by one parent against the other for the sole purpose of alienating a child from the other parent. This behavior is called "parental alienation," and involves programming or brainwashing a child into believing his other parent is bad. If effective, the child eventually believes, and then "sides" with, the "good" parent. While this behavior is sometimes apparent in intact families, it is most often exhibited by divorcing parents involved in custody litigation.

Once we realize that we, as parents and primary role models, are behaving badly toward our child's other parent, we should immediately take steps to alter our behavior so that a pattern of dysfunction is not repeated from one generation to the next:

- Stop talking negatively about the other parent in the presence of your children. Telling your child, "Your dad didn't come home last night because he was at a bar with his new girlfriend," serves absolutely no purpose.

- Don't put children in the middle of adult conflict. Negative statements made by one parent about the other parent make children feel they should be the referees between their parents, forcing them to choose sides.

- Find a family therapist. If you are angry at the other parent, you need to address that anger, or your children will likely grow up to be angry adults. Army Community Service offers many classes that address family dynamics, and the classes are confidential and free of charge.

- Locate alternate role models for your children. If you or the other parent is unable to be a positive role model for your children, consider finding and surrounding your children with other adults who are nurturing and caring so that your children can experience positive role models as they mature.

- Don't talk to your children about child support issues. "You need to remind your mother that I pay child support, so she can pay for your dance lessons. If she would stop buying herself clothes with my child support money, she could pay afford your lessons." Making statements like this makes your child feel guilty, ashamed and embarrassed.

If you feel like you are having difficulty being a good role model for your children, contact ACS at 568-7088 to enroll in a parenting class, anger management class, family advocacy class or stress management class. For related legal assistance, contact the Legal Assistance Office at 568-7141 to schedule an appointment.

*Negative statements made by one parent about the other parent make children feel they should be the referees between their parents, forcing them to choose sides.*

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# Choke falls somewhere between OK and disappointing

STEPHEN BAACK

Monitor Staff

I admit I had high expectations for *Choke*, the big-screen adaptation of Chuck Palahniuk's 2001 best-selling book of the same name.

The film stars Sam Rockwell as Victor Mancini, a sex-obsessed guy who actually chokes on food at fancy restaurants as a way to receive attention, love and, eventually, money to help pay for his senile mom's nursing home bill. Victor also works as a historical guide at a colonial museum of sorts and attends sex-addict recovery meetings.

For those who may not realize it, Palahniuk wrote another book that was turned into a much more successful movie starring Brad Pitt and Edward Norton. Hint: It rhymes with Kite Flub.

The two movies adapted from two different books by the same author are vastly different in scope, tone and feel — but they're also quite different in quality. This raises several questions: Were *Fight Club* and *Choke* comparable books? If not, could *Choke* have been salvaged? If the books were equals, was it director/screenwriter Clark Gregg who failed at making *Choke* a truly great movie? It's hard to argue that *Fight Club* director David Fincher was not at least partly responsible for that film's greatness.

Had I bothered to read either book, I would probably know the answers. I only read parts of each. The real question is, is it fair to compare the only two Palahniuk adaptations? Yes. Here we go ... *Fight Club* was a dark, funny,



COURTESY PHOTO

In *Choke*, the big screen adaptation of Chuck Palahniuk's 2001 novel, Sam Rockwell as Victor Mancini, left, stands by co-star Brad Pitt as Denny. The film also stars Anjelica Huston as Victor's mom, Ida, and Kelly Macdonald as Paige Marshall, Victor's love interest.

uncompromising, quotable and sprawling movie that covered dangerous and exciting subject matter. *Choke* is a quirky, silly, sick and depraved movie. *Choke*, unlike *Fight Club*, has arguably lighter messages and a more shallow scope.

If *Fight Club* and *Choke* are comparable books, then it proves how much the director and screenwriter truly matter in the adaptation process. Gregg should have taken lessons from Fincher in romanticizing Palahniuk's story.

Even on its own, erasing the expectations that *Fight Club* brings with it, *Choke* still doesn't quite hold up. I get the sense that the ideas in *Choke* are so good, interesting and funny it took finesse to mess it all up. Well, sorry, but I'm sure Gregg gave it a great try. It just didn't take.

First off, the pacing just wasn't there. Each new scene introduces itself as if to say, "Hey, here I am. I'm a new scene. Sam Rockwell, stage left."

Also, nothing about the movie seems homogeneous. Theoretically, a

good film should have an array of tones and themes, with the story acting as a mechanism to bring it all together. The tones and themes in *Choke* fight for space, as do the subplots.

Even though the characters here are interesting and anything but run-of-the-mill, at least a couple of them fall flat.

Following around Victor like a lost puppy is his friend Denny (played by Brad Pitt), who seems to serve little other purpose than to magnify Victor's traits. Paige Marshall (played by Kelly Macdonald) plays Victor's love interest, and serves as the only girl in the film who can bring out his genuine feelings. While her screen time rivals that of Victor's mom Ida (played by Anjelica Huston), I'm honestly not sure whether Macdonald is a bad actress or her overly innocent and almost deadpan manner of speaking is on purpose.

*Choke* is not for the overly sensitive, squeamish or those averse to strong sexual content. It's far from a family movie and it makes what could be considered offensive references to religious figures.

The regretful thing is that it's easy to root for *Choke*. Most of the actors are charismatic, the underlying stories are interesting and the ideas are fun. But it's no fun waiting for a movie to pull itself together past the halfway point.

Luckily, there are plenty of other chances to make good on this misstep: Palahniuk's *Survivor*, *Invisible Monsters* and *Lullaby* come to mind. The question is, who will be at the helm?

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# Punk Rock Etiquette offers useful guide to musical manners

DUSTIN PERRY

Editor

It is a well-known scientific fact that everyone wants to be in a band. *Everyone*. At least, that’s what illustrator/musician/author Travis Nichols was presumably banking on when he wrote *Punk Rock Etiquette: The Ultimate How-To Guide for DIY, Punk, Indie and Underground Bands*.

As the book’s lengthy subtitle suggests, *Etiquette* offers loads of tips to aspiring rockers from the perspective of Nichols, who has firsthand experience wading through the not-so-glamorous trenches of the (extremely) indie-rock scene. It is a refreshingly quick read, and Nichols punches up his earnest advice with enough humor and personal anecdotes to paint a realistic picture of what it must be like to play in – and tour with – a garage band with a few buddies.

To be sure, the book is very much geared toward the class of bands that truly qualify as “indie” – the ones whose members hand-draw their own posters and flyers, make CD sleeves from cereal boxes, count on word-of-mouth publicity, and survive by booking any paying gig they can get their hands on (and going half-sies on gas and food money). Steven Tyler and Mick Jagger will find nothing useful here, but for the remaining 95 percent of bands who regularly lug their equipment around in a used GMC van, the information contained in Nichols’ guide is invaluable.

Part One provides descriptions of several common types of potential bandmates (i.e., The Tortured Poet, The Rock Star, The Delinquent) and lists their respective pros and cons. Also given is an insightful list of do’s and don’ts to follow when choosing the look and name of your group (do not wear one of your band’s own T-shirts on stage, and avoid using weird capitalization in your band’s moniker: “SeE hoW lame iT



LoOkS?” writes Nichols.)

Nichols has played in a number of bands (Omega Monster Patrol!, the Needies) and even self-released a few albums, so it’s obvious he knows his stuff when it comes to *Etiquette’s* subject matter. And the passion with which he writes about life as a small-time musician is incredibly endearing and honest. Nichols hasn’t hit the big time yet, but to hear him tell it, the sense of satisfaction and fan adoration he gets from performing

at a local youth center is comparable to a headlining gig at Madison Square Garden.

Information about the technical side of music abounds, with advice about the different types of recording equipment, how to best utilize your time in a studio, and even a step-by-step guide for screen-printing your own T-shirts (merchandise can be a significant source of revenue for even the most amateurish of bands, Nichols says.)

The heart of *Etiquette* lies in the very genesis of its inception: manners in music. Nichols’ tongue-in-cheek delusions of grandeur may elevate the persona of a humble musician to that of a bona fide rock god who would gladly melt your face off with a blistering guitar solo, but he is still very much a Nice Young Man. A lifelong Texan, a vegan and a relentless friend to the environment, Nichols is adamant about practicing good behavior on stage and on tour.

For example, it is standard procedure to thank the venue before beginning your set and talk up the next band afterward. When you finish, get your gear off stage quickly, tip the sound guy (who knew?) and politely ask for your payment (but divide the profits among touring bands if you are the local act).

Not everyone can be a rock star, but even if you have no musical ability, are a homebody, or have a family and full-time career (strikes one, two and three against folks like me), *Etiquette* is still an enjoyable read. Nichols also dresses things up nicely with his distinctly cute illustrations of anthropomorphic animals, which are scattered throughout.

For beginner bands whose members need some inside information on how to get their collective feet in the door, the book is a valuable tool. And for would-be guitar heroes who still need to master the A chord, it’s still totally punk rock.

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# Beck brings rocking show to enthused El Paso crowd

DUSTIN PERRY

Editor

While standing in line Thursday evening at the entrance of the Abraham Chavez Theatre, I peered inside the building and happened to catch a glimpse of the man who would be entertaining a nearly sold-out crowd of 2,000 eager fans in a little more than an hour. Wearing a crumpled black fedora, a slim-fitting jacket, a striped shirt and black jeans and flanked by a pair of police escorts, he passed behind the merchandise table with his head down.

"There's Beck," I said, in a voice so quiet that only a few people in my immediate vicinity heard it. When the lanky figure emerged on the other side of a wall of T-shirts a few seconds later, high-pitched shrieks were let out by some girls standing in line. In a blink-and-you'll-miss-it moment that couldn't have been more mundane, one of the most humble musicians in the business had rendered a small group of people star-struck. The effect was understandably amplified tenfold when he later took the stage and charged through a 90-minute set that included some of his best songs.

The El Paso performance was one of Beck's many stops in a still-ongoing tour supporting his newest album, the critically lauded *Modern Guilt*. Now a dozen albums and 14 years into a celebrated career as one of Generation X's defining musical voices, Beck — joined by his excellent backing band — made the most of the Chavez's modest stage with a loud, funky and energetic show that left his fans wanting more.

After a tight six-song set from opening band MGMT (who closed with "Kids," the irresistibly catchy centerpiece from their debut album *Oracular Spectacular*), the same unassuming figure who gave me and a few other concertgoers our "ohmigod!" moment earlier in the evening walked out to a microphone stand planted directly center-stage to a crowd that erupted in screams and whistles.

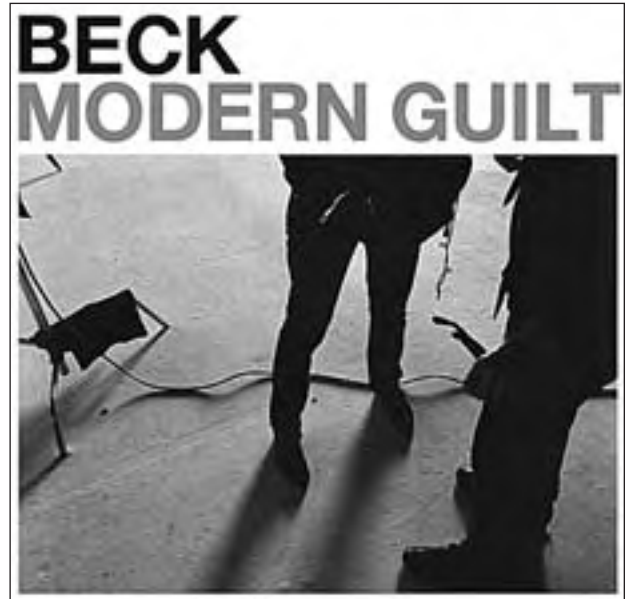
Beck opened his set with a blistering rendition of "Devils Haircut," the leadoff song from his 1996 masterpiece *Odelay*. A wall of white LED lights behind the band morphed into a series of generic geometric images as chugging guitars gave way to the song's screamed coda: "Devil's haircut in my mind!/Got a devil's haircut in my *miiiiind!*"

Next was "Orphans," one of the six songs from *Modern Guilt* that were represented throughout the night's performance. It was almost cathartic getting to hear the live version of a tune from an album I've been listening to on endless repeat since its July release. Considering this was my first Beck concert — and the fact that he is my all-time favorite musician — the feeling stood true for the entire set list.

One of the best moments of the night was a surprise performance of "Timebomb," a Grammy-nominated, digital-only single released last year, all but unknown except to the fans who bothered to hunt it down on iTunes. An infectious tune with a rhythm as urgent as the song's title suggests, "Timebomb" revved up an already wired crowd.

Throughout the performance, Beck name-checked El Paso several times, inserting the city's name into some of his lyrics. At one point he even said, in that signature laid-back, B-boy delivery of his, "Point me to the Black Market," referring to an impromptu gig he played at the tiny El Paso club two years ago when his tour bus stopped here on the way back to his hometown of Los Angeles.

A medley of hits "Black Tambourine" and "Clap Hands," from Beck's 2005 album *Guero*, meshed nicely together, thanks to some hip-hop flavor from the whole band. The headphone- and earpiece-sporting musicians gathered at the front of the stage and kicked out synthetic beats with the help of a few handheld devices, including an iPod that was modified into a miniature turntable and used by Beck for some fine



faux-vinyl scratching.

Speaking of (two) turntables (and a microphone), an explosive version of "Where it's At," arguably Beck's biggest hit, had practically the entire crowd jumping and shouting the song's classic chorus.

Near the end of the show, Beck broke away from his own repertoire of songs to jam on one by a legendary artist he has been likened to since the beginning of his career: Bob Dylan. With their eclectic, ever-changing styles and surreal lyrics, it's an apt comparison to make, and Beck and the band held their own through an excellent rendition of the Tambourine Man's "Leopard-Skin Pill-Box Hat."

*Guero* cut "E-Pro" was the final song of the night — and what a closer it was. The song's schoolyard-taunt chorus ("Na, na, na-na-na-na!") succeeded in making the crowd lose its collective mind and begin the closest approximation of moshing you're likely to see at a Beck concert.

When the song ended, Beck thanked the audience and departed the stage as quickly as he disappeared behind the wall of T-shirts in the front lobby. A humble exit for an artist who put on one of the best shows the city has seen this year.

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